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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

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July 9, 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

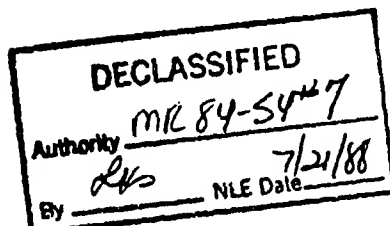
Subject: Summit Meeting and Disarmament

In planning for a possible Summit meeting I believe serious thought should be given to a new start toward general disarmament. Khrushchev has shown interest on several occasions. Last February he told Macmillan that the USSR would be willing to see armed forces abolished and only militia retained for internal security (Enclosure 1). Ambassador Thompson believes there is a genuine possibility that Khrushchev would in fact agree to total disarmament, with full control and inspection (Enclosure 2).

Of course this is still only a possibility, not a probability. But in my judgment the implications of the arms race are so grave as to give both sides powerful inducement to stop it. Indeed there should be more common ground between us and the Russians on this point than any other. The difficulties are enormous, and yet when it comes to disarmament big decisions may be easier than little ones. Even a start in the right direction would be a major turning-point.

You could move for such a start at the Summit by frankly outlining the problem as you see it. The arms race is increasingly developing a momentum of its own which could easily, like 1914, bring on the war nobody wanted. A general war would profit no nation. The cost of armaments meanwhile is a world tragedy in the face of the real needs of mankind. Serious difficulties between nations will keep arising as long as history lasts, but

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the time has come when the world must learn to work them out by means other than war. Thinkers have dreamed about disarmament for centuries. It is time for governments to get on with its accomplishment.

The elements of a general disarmament program are agreed levels of forces and equipment, verification procedures and machinery for keeping the peace between disarmed states. The United Kingdom Defense Minister, Duncan Sandys, prepared an analysis last year which might usefully be drawn on (Enclosure 3).

As a start toward defining limits on internal security forces, the United Nations could be asked to obtain estimates of national requirements from all countries.

A fresh approach to the verification problem might be launched at a Summit by telling Khrushchev you agree that inspection and control of weapons systems should be considered simultaneously with proposals to reduce the danger of surprise attack.

You could point to your recent directive for a new disarmament study in the United States Government as an earnest of your seriousness in this field.

You might propose that the enforcement problem be explored in a general way by high-level representatives of the Heads of Government. Meanwhile at the Summit Khrushchev might be pressed to agree on safeguarded nuclear test suspension, as a means of encouraging movement all along the line.

Given the way the Soviets work, it would be a mistake to expect the exploratory talks to produce any agreement. They should rather be looked on as means of clearing away some underbrush and helping the Heads of Government develop their own thinking, looking toward a second Summit at which the main issues would be tackled. If, as seems likely, only limited progress were then made,

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the process of staff talks and occasional Summits could continue. Even slow progress in this fashion through the years could spell the difference between doom and survival.

*Clinton A. Hester*



Enclosures:

1. Excerpt from British summary of Macmillan-Khrushchev discussions, February 1959.
2. Excerpt from Ambassador Thompson's telegram, March 9, 1959.
3. Duncan Sandys paper, dated April 22, 1958.

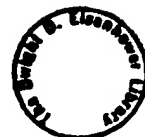
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Enclosure 2.

Excerpt from Ambassador Thompson's telegram from Moscow,  
March 9, 1959.

At the other extreme of policy there is the possibility of total disarmament with full control and inspection. Although this may sound dreamy and does have enormous risks, I believe it worthy of serious study and that there is genuine possibility Khrushchev would agree to it. This may in fact be one of proposals he expects to put forward at a Summit conference. While full discussion beyond bounds this message I wish merely to suggest that I do not believe communism as it now exists could long live in freer atmosphere and contacts which would almost inevitably follow as next step. While risks on both sides would be enormous, they should in my view be judged in light of alternative of nuclear war. I also suggest we should re-examine our position on a more limited disarmament agreement involving drastic cuts in land forces.



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